

## THE ECONOMY OF INDO-CHINA

treaties with China and the Philippines will probably create a greater volume of trade in those directions.

### THE HUMAN FACTOR IN PRODUCTION

#### *Labour in the North*

Judo-China, with its 23,000,000 population, numbers half that of France, in a country that is a third larger.<sup>1</sup> Although small by comparison with the average density per square kilometre of other Oriental countries, Indo-China has more of a population than the other French colonies. The wealth of the colony lies in its labour. Its great characteristic is its uneven distribution. Tonkin and North Annam are one of the most thickly populated regions of the world, whereas the mountain districts often have fewer than five inhabitants to the square kilometre. Three-fourths of the Indo-Chinese live on the plains near the sea—on a tenth of the whole country's surface. Ninety per cent of this population is rural, and only in recent years has there been a trend towards the colony's five large towns.<sup>2</sup> Of these 20,000,000 it has been estimated that 56 per cent form the active labouring class.

Landowning constitutes the sole Aimamite capital. Almost all the big Annamite proprietors live in Cochin-China.<sup>3</sup> Tonkin has most of the others, then Cambodia follows, with almost none at all in Annam. The big bourgeoisie of Cochin-China, numerically fairly unimportant, enjoy a large percentage of that country's revenues. They are, in general, absentee landlords—only 64 per cent cultivate their own lands—who live in the towns, and who have the usual bailiff relations with their peasants. Because of their official connections, it would be folly for one of their tenants to bring suit against these rich landowners, so the masses must resign themselves to being

fleeced. Their profits do not come from their crops, because these landowners have high running expenses, but from lending money at usurious rates. In them the French have created not a bourgeoisie but a plutocracy. More than the French colonists, they have benefited by the colonial regime: for a dozen French fortunes in Indo-China, there are more than twenty AoBamite and a hundred Chinese. This class constitutes a danger to rural economy, as well as to France's political sovereignty. During the de-

<sup>1</sup> 737»Q°° sq- km. to 550,000. The population is 27 to the square kilometre in Indo-China, as compared with 76' in Fiance.

<sup>s</sup> Soigoik-Choion numbers 300,000; Hanoi, 120,000; Bnona-Beaih, 100,000; Nam-IHnh, 75,000.

\* 6\*3«0 **out** of 6,690, established by the 1931 Inquiry.